

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00043 01 OF 02 031925Z

43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-11 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

SCEM-02 INT-08 CIEP-02 AID-20 IGA-02 DRC-01 OMB-01

OPIC-12 /192 W

----- 011096

R 031755Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9518

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC

USINT ALGIERS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 00043 01 OF 02 031925Z

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

USCINCEUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 0043

DEPARTMENT PASS USINT CAIRO

E.O. 11652: DECON UPON RECEIPT

TAGS: PFOR, BE, EEC, XF, ENGR

SUBJECT: BELGIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE OIL CRISIS, THE US,
THE USSR, AND ISRAEL

REF: BRUSSELS 7516

1. TWO LEADING BELGIAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE CO-SPONSORED A PUBLIC OPINION POLL TESTING POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE OIL CRISIS, ITS CAUSES AND ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTION, ISRAEL, THE US, AND THE USSR, AND THE INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES. WHATEVER DISTORTIONS WERE BUILT INTO THE POLL BY ITS DESIGNERS AND HOWEVER CONTRADICTORY SOME OF THE RESULTS APPEAR, THE RESULTS AS PUBLISHED JANUARY 3 AND 4 ARE OPEN TO INTERPRETATION AND FURTHER PUBLICITY ABOARD AS SHOWING AN UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG TENDENCY TO BLAME THE US AND ESPECIALLY THE INTERNATIONAL (READ US) OIL COMPANIES FOR THE ARAB BOYCOTT. THE RESULTS ALSO SHOW SURPRISINGLY STRONG SUPPORT FOR TAKING ACTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL TO WIN ARAB FAVOR AND FOR NATIONALIZING THE BELGIAN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY.

2. THE POLL WAS ADMINISTERED TO 1500 "REPRESENTATIVE" BELGIANS OF ALL REGIONAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND LINGUISTIC SECTORS BETWEEN DECEMBER 12 AND 19, I.E. BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GREATER AVAILABILITY OF ARAB OIL AT GREATLY INCREASED PRICES. THE SPONSORS OF THE POLL ARE THE BRUSSELS DAILIES LE SOIR (MASS CIRCULATION INDEPENDENT) AND DE STANDAARD (IMPORTANT CATHOLIC). THE COMMERCIAL RESEARCH AGENCY IS THE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC OPINION TESTING (INUSOP) LOOSELY AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF BRUSSELS.*THE OPINION STUDY IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 00043 01 OF 02 031925Z

COVERING IMPLICATIONS FOR (A) FOREIGN POLICY AND (B) DOMESTIC POLICY.

3. RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED WHETHER THEY THINK THE ARAB BOYCOTT WAS MOST INFLUENCED BY THE US--TO WEAKEN THE ECONOMY OF EUROPE, THE USSR--TO WEAKEN WESTERN COUNTRIES, OR THE OIL COMPANIES -- FOR UNSPECIFIED REASONS. THE RESULTS SHOW THAT 39.5 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS

CREDIT THE OIL COMPANIES WITH THE PRIMARY INFLUENCE, 21.3 PERCENT THE US, AND 25.9 PERCENT THE USSR. WHILE THESE PROPORTIONS PREVAILED NATIONALLY, FLANDEERS GAVE THE HIGHEST VOTE TO THE OIL COMPANIES (41.5 PERCENT) AND BRUSSELS THE LOWEST (32.8PERCENT). WHILE THE RESPECTIVE ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME REMAINED THE SAME REGARDLESS OF AGE GROUP OR SOCIAL CONDITION, YOUNGER PEOPLE WERE MORE INCLINED THAN OLDER PEOPLE TO BLAME THE US AND THE REVERSE WAS TRUE WITH RESPECT TO THE USSR.

4. ASKED TO IMAGINE THAT THEY WERE MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT CHOOSING BETWEEN OPTIONAL COURSES OF (A) TAKING MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO ISRAELI AGREEMENT TO EVACUATE THE ARAB TERRITORIES SO THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES WOULD CONSIDER BELGIUM A FRIEND, OR (B) TAKING MEASURES OF REPRISAL AGAINST THE ARAB COUNTRIES TO MAKE THEM SUPPLY MORE OIL, 44.1 PERCENT VOTED FOR PRESSURE ON ISRAEL AND 31.2 PERCENT FOR MEASURES AGAINST THE ARAB COUNTRIES. IN FLANDERS THESE RESULTS WERE 51.2 PERCENT AND 26.7 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY.

5. THE POLLSTERS SUGGESTED NO SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE MEASURES TO PRESSURE THE ISRAELIS AND THE RESPONDENTS APPEAR TO HAVE VOLUNTEERED NONE. ON THE OTHER HAND, 7.8 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS VOLUNTARILY SUGGESTED THE IDEA OF REDUCING DEVELOPMENTAL AID TO ARAB COUNTRIES AND 1.8 PERCENT SUGGESTED EXPELLING ARAB WORKERS (MOSTLY ALGERIAN AND MOROCCANS). WHEN ASKED TO REACT TO A PROPOSAL FOR MEASURES INCLUDING EXPULSION, 25 PERCENT APPROVED. THIS FIGURE ROSE TO 40.3 PERCENT IN THE BRUSSELS AREA WHERE THESE WORKERS ARE CONCENTRATED. SIMILARLY, IN THE BRUSSELS AREA, AND INVERSE TO THE OUTCOME NATIONALLY, 43 PERCENT VOTED FOR MEASURES AGAINST THE ARAB COUNTRIES

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 BRUSSE 00043 01 OF 02 031925Z

VERSUS 31.5 PERCENT FOR PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00043 02 OF 02 031938Z

45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-11 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

SCEM-02 INT-08 CIEP-02 AID-20 IGA-02 DRC-01 OMB-01

OPIC-12 /192 W

----- 011172

R 031755Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9519

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OLSO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC

USINT ALGIERS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 00043 02 OF 02 031938Z

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

USCINCEUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 BRUSSELS 0043

DEPARTMENT PASS USINT CAIRO

6. QUESTIONS POSED IN PART I OF THE STUDY COVER FOUR AREAS:

- GOV FOREIGN POLICY MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO ISRAEL AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES;
- ARAB MOTIVES (POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC) FOR THE BOYCOTT;
- FOREIGN INFLUENCE BEHIND THE ARAB RESTRICTIONS;
- AID TO THE NETHERLANDS BY THE OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

7. RESPONDENTS WERE OFFERED A CHOICE AMONG THREE MOTIVATIONS FOR THE ARAB RESTRICTIONS:

- TO SECURE HIGHER PRICES FOR CRUDE OIL;
- TO PROTECT RESERVES;
- TO INFLUENCE AND CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL.

WHILE RESPONDENTS COULD AND DID CITE ALL THREE MOTIVATIONS, THE VOTE BY PRIORITY MOTIVE WAS 50.4 PERCENT FOR (POLITICAL) INFLUENCE AND THE CONFLICT, 35.1 FOR (ECONOMIC) AUGMENTATION OF OIL PRICES, AND 11.2 PERCENT FOR PROTECTION OF RESERVES.

8. ON AID TO THE NETHERLANDS, RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HELPING HOLLAND AND "STAYING OUT OF A PROBLEM BETWEEN HOLLAND AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES." THE VOTE WAS 57.9 PERCENT FOR HELPING AND 36 PERCENT FOR NOT HELPING. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES SHOWED A 64.8 PERCENT TO 26.8 PERCENT RATIO IN THE BRUSSELS AREA, VERSUS 56.7 PERCENT TO 37.3 PERCENT IN FLANDERS AND 57.3 PERCENT TO 37.3 PERCENT IN WALLONIA.

9. IN PRESENTING THESE RESULTS, LE SOIR COMMENTED EDITORIALY UNDER THE HEADLINE "A PRUDENT INTERPRETATION IS IN ORDER." THE REPLIES, OBSERVED LE SOIR EDITOR TACQUENIER, DO NOT PERMIT DRAWING DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS ON BELGIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 00043 02 OF 02 031938Z

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. THE QUESTIONS WERE HYPOTHETICAL AND POSED TO PEOPLE CONFUSED AND FEARFUL ABOUT GAS AND HEATING SHORTAGES. THE REPLIES ARE INTERNALLY INCONSISTENT ONE WITH ANOTHER, E.G. THE STRENGTH OF THE VOTE IN FAVOR OF HELPING THE NETHERLANDS IS NOT READILY RECONCILED WITH THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT GIVEN TO PRESSURE ISRAEL. THERE IS A SIMILAR INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE "ECONOMIC" BALM GIVEN THE OIL COMPANIES AND THE FINDING THAT THE ARAB MOTIVATION IS PREDOMINANTLY POLITICAL.

10. EMBASSY COMMENT: AIDING HOLLAND (FAVORED) WOULD

ALSO HAVE INVITED ARAB HOSTILITY (NOT FAVORED). WE ARE
STRUCK BY THE STRUCTURAL IMCOMPATIBILITY OF
QUESTION 2 (ARAB MOTIVATION) AND 3 (FOREIGN RESPONSIBILITY).
IN QUESTION THREE, RESPONDENTS ARE ASKED TO RANK THREE
THESES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO REQUIRE THEM TO ADOPT ONE OR
MORE OF THEM AS GIVEN. DESPITE THE
LIMITATION OF THIS PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH STUDY, WE
SEE IT AS AN INDICATION OF PUBLIC OPINION DISORIENTATION
IN BELGIUM, AND PROBABLY ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, REGARDING
THE ROLE OF THE US AND OF INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES.
PART II OF THE BELGIAN RESEARCH STUDY, ON DOMESTIC POLICY
IMPLICATIONS, RATIONING VERSUS OTHER LIMITATIONS, POSSIBLE
NATIONALIZATION OF THE OIL INDUSTRY, ETC. WILL BE REPORTED IN
SEPARATE MESSAGE. TOGETHER WITH EMBASSY ASSESSMENT. STRAUZ-HUPE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM, BOYCOTTS, NEGOTIATIONS, EMBARGOES, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRUSSE00043
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740165/aaaacjq.tel
Line Count: 293
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BRUSSELS 7516
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <23 APR 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELGIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE OIL CRISIS, THE US, THE USSR, AND ISRAEL
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, BE, XF, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005